

The Purpose & Place of Music in Liturgy

Michael Mangan

Selected Quotes

CSL / SC – Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy / *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

DMC – Directory for Masses with Children

GIRM – General Instruction of the Roman Missal

MS – *Musicam Sacram* / Instruction on Music in the Liturgy

STL – Sing to the Lord **MCW** – Music in Catholic Worship

Liturgy - Full, Conscious, Active Participation

...the whole public worship ...performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members. (CSL 7)

(The liturgy is) for the sanctification of (people) & the glorification of God. (CSL 10)

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy.

In the reform and promotion of the liturgy ... full and active participation by all the people is to be considered before all else. (CSL14) (STL 11)

To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs as well as by actions, gesture and bearing.... (CSL 30)

The Four Liturgical Presences of Christ

• Priest • Word • Eucharistic Elements (Bread & Wine) • Assembly (CSL 7)

Presence

Presider

Eucharist

Word

Assembly

Minister/s

Priest

Priest, EMOHC

Priest, Lectors, Psalmist

(Hospitality)

Music Ministry

Music Ministry: Ministers of the Body of Christ in the Assembly
Must be Assembly-Focused.

Liturgical Inculturation

Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius & talents of the various races & peoples. (CSL 37)

Provisions shall also be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples, especially in mission lands, provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved; (CSL 38)

In mission lands, there are peoples who have their own musical traditions, and these play a great part in their religious and social life. For this reason due importance is to be attached to their music, and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius. (CSL 119)

Music in Liturgy

Singing is one of the primary ways that the assembly of the faithful participates actively in the Liturgy. (STL 26)

Liturgical music must always be chosen and sung "with due consideration for the culture of the people and abilities of each liturgical assembly". (STL 58)

(Music) forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy. (CSL 112)

One cannot find anything more religious and more joyful in sacred celebrations than a whole congregation expressing its faith and devotion in song. (MS 16)

Sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites. (CSL 112)

Assembly Focused Music Ministry

- Is the Assembly able to confidently sing this song?
- Is this song in the best key for the Assembly?
- Are we **leading** the Assembly or **performing** for them?
- Can the Assembly hear themselves sing or are we drowning them out?
- **Tempo:** Are we failing to provide vibrant leadership by playing too slowly?
- Are we enabling this Assembly to be joyfully united in sung prayer?

Why Music?

- **Celebration / Unity** - Music creates a sense of celebration & shared song immediately unifies the assembly as one voice.
- **Sets Tone & Mood** - Music & song can easily set and change the tone & mood of liturgical celebrations.
- **Heightens Texts** - A musical structure allows us to repeat and highlight key words, phrases & scriptural texts.
- **Reinforces Themes & Symbols** - Music & song can help unlock and reinforce the meanings of symbols within a celebration
- **Highlights important Parts of Liturgy** - Within Eucharistic Liturgy music is used to highlight the important parts of the Liturgy, especially through the Acclamations

Which Music?

3 Judgments for Liturgical Music. (STL 126-136, MCW 25-41)

- **Musical:** Is the music technically, aesthetically and expressively good?
- **Liturgical:** Does the musical style and lyrical content of chosen repertoire fit this celebration and fulfil the liturgical needs of the different parts of the ritual?
Is the music within the capabilities of the Assembly?
- **Pastoral:** Does the music in this celebration allow these people to express their faith in this place, in this age, in this culture?

Liturgical v Catechetical v Inspirational v Devotional

Not all “God” songs are meant for Liturgical use!

Contact Michael at Litmus Productions:

email: info@litmusproductions.com

Website: www.litmusproductions.com

Principle of “Progressive Solemnity”:

Singing the most Important parts of the Mass

- 1. Acclamations:** **Gospel Acclamation**
Holy, Holy, Holy
Mystery of Faith
Amen

• *Are the acclamations joyful and easily sung by the Assembly?*

Dialogues with Presider e.g. “The Lord be with you ...”

- & “Litanies”** **Kyrie** (Lord Have Mercy)
Universal Prayer (Intercessions)
Lamb of God

2. Processionals & Hymns:

Gathering Song: Open the celebration, Foster Unity,
Highlight Season or Festivity,
Accompany the Procession (GIRM 47)

- *Is it singable? Does it UNIFY the Assembly?*
- *Does it use corporate language “we”, “us”, “our”?*
- *Does it help us enter into the liturgical season?*

Glory to God: Sundays & Solemnities *Not sung in Advent or Lent*

Communion Song: Express union of spirit through unity of voices,
Shows “joy of heart.” (GIRM 86)

- *Is it Singable? Using corporate language – “we”, “us”, “our”?*
- *Are we beginning as the Priest receives Communion?*
- *Is it a song of UNITY rather than a song of adoration?*

- 3. Responsorial Psalm:** Are we at least singing the people’s Response?
Have we considered using a Common psalm for a whole season? (GIRM 61)

4. Other Parts may be sung but are less important:

Offertory/Procession of Gifts
Song of Praise (After Communion)
Recessional Song